

Adoration by runs_in_the_family

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Summary:

“You know, you do this a lot.” Billy’s fingers drum on the wallpaper. “I’m trying to have a conversation with you and you just ignore me.” He can feel a warm exhale on his cheek as Billy leans over his shoulder.

“Could give somebody the wrong idea. Make them think you don’t like me.”

There’s an urge to scoff that he just barely manages to squash.

“That can’t be it though, right?” Billy mocks incredulity. “I mean, you and me, we’re buddies.”

When he pushes closer to his ear, Steve just shuts his eyes and grits his teeth.

“Amigos.” Billy hums.

Billy shuts up and finally starts saying something.

Adoration

Sometimes it feels like there isn't a day that goes by when he doesn't need to tell Billy to shut the fuck up. It's never just one lone insult with him, it's always a fucking monologue. Incessant jabs about anything, *everything*. Steve tries to ignore it, until he can't, and then he'll hurl out a "Shut the fuck up, Hargrove" and that usually does the trick.

It's not that Billy's threatened by the response though. The opposite. He always looks delighted, smugly satisfied in a way that Steve feels is so quintessentially him. He'll go silent and hold Steve's gaze for longer than seems right, before cracking that smile that says "I won".

Steve's found, however, that the more Billy drinks, the less verbal he becomes. As parties wear on into the morning hours, the wry comments and demeaning nicknames fall short, replaced with simple, silent glares. Sometimes a drunken Billy will just crowd him, block his entry through a doorway or hover behind him as he gets a drink. This play is an easier one to ignore. All it requires is a few seconds of patience before the guy gives up and wanders off. Sometimes he'll mumble an unprovoked "Fuck you, Harrington" before he moves on.

It's entering those early hours now, at Shelley Dawson's post-game pool party. Most of the party-goers are drunkenly risking their lives in the deep end, seeing who can hold their breath the longest. Steve, still sober enough to know that he's too drunk to swim, is waiting to get into the upstairs bathroom. He's a one man queue, every one else making the most of one of Hawkins's biggest houses being distinctly parent-free. The music's loud, as is the yelling and splashing in the back yard. As are the two, if not three, couples having sex in various bedrooms around him.

He can remember hooking up at parties. He can remember losing his virginity in Ricky Morrison's parents room when he was fifteen, when Ricky's older brother had let a bunch of the freshmen invade his Christmas kegger. Her name was lost to him now but she was hot and in college and he'd thought that was so cool at the time. Still did,

kind of. But he also thought sometimes that it kind of wasn't. That actually, maybe, it was kind of fucked up.

He can remember Rebecca Epson's Halloween party in sophomore year and listening to the muffled sounds of "Bette Davis Eyes" as Laurie sucked him off in a hall closet. He's pretty sure it's still the best blowjob he's ever had. To this day, he gets a little chub hearing the lyrics "She'll tease you, she'll unease you, all the better just to please you".

He can remember getting a hand job from Becky in the darkest corner of some house after homecoming. He'd immediately disappeared so he could find Amy and convince her to let him fuck her because Becky, too afraid of getting caught, wouldn't put out. Fortunately, Amy wasn't that worried.

Ironically, Becky had ended up walking in on them. She'd made a scene. Steve had drunkenly asked her what he was supposed to have done if she wasn't gonna finish what she'd started.

He feels bad about that one. Often and a lot.

It's been a while since he's hooked up at a party. Potentially getting caught in compromising positions hadn't exactly been Nancy's thing. After the shit with Jonathan's photos, everything they did was kept behind locked doors and closed blinds. She'd gone from making out in the school bathrooms to being too freaked to even park with him. Didn't matter that she'd forgiven Byers, didn't matter how close they became as friends. That wasn't really the point. Once a moment like that gets broadcast, it's hard to feel safe again. There's something that's lost there. She'd explained it to Steve one night, the two of them safely tucked away in his bed with the curtains drawn and no sign of life for half a mile. She'd explained it and he'd understood.

He's happy for her now, he really is. But sometimes, when she bristles at Jonathan's attempts to kiss her in public, a small rage swirls in Steve's stomach for a moment. Because Jonathan took that away from her and Steve doesn't think Byers will ever really know it.

He leans his head against the bathroom door and wills himself to think happier thoughts. He's at a party. There's beer that doesn't suck

and no one's given him shit yet. Even Billy has kept his usual drunken provocations to a minimum, throwing only one look his way the entire evening.

It's a good night. It's a good night. Well, it's not a bad one. Not as bad as a lot of ones are these days.

Some guy moans his way through an orgasm in the room at the end of the hall and Steve rolls his eyes, partly because the soundtrack of people fucking always sounds stupid and partly because Steve wishes he was the one making the noise.

He remembers hooking up at parties. He fucking misses it too.

His buzz takes over slightly when he starts sniggering at the voices coming from the room off to his left. Some girl is having way more fun than he is, so much so that she's about to shatter the mirror hanging across the hall. The sudden exclamation of "I'm sorry, Daddy!" makes him break his shit laughing.

After he steadies himself and clears his throat, he clocks a set of footsteps behind him. Before he has time to turn around, there's a voice in his ear.

"What's so funny?"

Steve hates himself for jumping. He throws a scant glance over his shoulder before returning his gaze to the door.

"Come on, what is it?" Billy probes, bracing an arm against the wall. "You got something you wanna share with the class, Harrington?"

Steve wills the door to open, telepathically begs whoever the hell is on the other side to hurry up and let him escape Billy's bullshit.

"You know, you do this a lot." Billy's fingers drum on the wallpaper. "I'm trying to have a conversation with you and you just ignore me."

He can feel a warm exhale on his cheek as Billy leans over his shoulder.

“Could give somebody the wrong idea. Make them think you don’t like me.”

There’s an urge to scoff that he just barely manages to squash.

“That can’t be it though, right?” Billy mocks incredulity. “I mean, you and me, we’re buddies.”

When he pushes closer to his ear, Steve just shuts his eyes and grits his teeth.

“Amigos.” Billy hums.

Like a painfully unfunny joke, the music picks up downstairs. Before the lyrics even start, the beat alone has his arms coming over with goose bumps.

Her hair is Harlow gold, her lips are sweet surprise...

If he wasn’t trying so hard to keep his mouth shut, Steve would have been hurling obscenities at the universe and its cruelty.

“Or maybe you just get a little shy. Little nervous.” Billy’s voice is deeper now. “Cause you really do like me, just a little too much.”

It’s prime provocation material. You don’t say shit like that to a guy without expecting a hell of a reaction. Sure enough, an instinctive, defensive retort almost breaks Steve’s vow of silence but he holds it back. It’s not worth seeing the satisfied grin on that face.

Billy pulls back but stays hovering behind him. He sighs and Steve can feel it skim across the back of his neck.

“Loud up here.” He remarks, as if nothing else has been said.

Steve opens his eyes and glares at the door.

It’s true. Even if he was able to fully blank out both Billy and the music wafting up from downstairs, Steve would still be left with the ludicrously vocal antics taking place around him. Another apology to “Daddy” comes belting out of the bedroom to his left and, despite his frustration, he can’t fight the urge to laugh slightly.

He can hear a satisfied grunt behind him and knows that Billy's going to have a field day with it.

"That's what you were laughing at?" He scoffs. "The screamer?"

Steve starts to wonder if whoever is in the bathroom has passed out.

"What, you never get a little excited between the sheets, pretty boy?"

A knuckle brushes down the side of his neck. A lit cigarette couldn't have made him recoil any faster. Billy just hums like he's taken a bite of something delicious.

"Got a mood on you, Harrington. So fucking jumpy."

The impulse to snap is getting stronger. Steve starts to wonder if the satisfaction of telling Billy to fuck off isn't worth the bastard's smug grin.

He doesn't find out, though. Tries instead to just block it out. Keeps his mouth shut, eyes on the door. He tries to focus on something other than that voice but his options aren't great. He's got creaking beds and excited moans all around him or he's got...

She's ferocious, and she knows just what it takes to make a pro blush...

And then his main concern is trying not to think about Rebecca Epson's hall closet.

Because, as stupid as the sound of people fucking is, it's still making him twitch a little. And even though it's not Laurie or Amy or Becky, he's still got someone's breath on his skin and their voice in his ear. And even though the lyrics are partially lost in a sea of drunken voices, Kim fucking Carnes is there, rushing half his blood to his cheeks and the other half to his dick.

He wonders if he really needed to use the damn bathroom this badly. Wonders why he hasn't walked away yet.

“Know what, I think I get it now.” It’s close enough to make Steve shiver. “Why you’re always giving me the silent treatment.”

Billy doesn’t elaborate, just lets it hang there like Steve’s supposed to know what this epiphany is. As if his reason for ignoring him is anything other than “Billy Hargrove is an asshole”.

The music keeps playing. He needs to tug at his jeans but there’s no way he’s going for it.

“You know, I bet you wish you were making all that noise, don’t you?” The smile on Billy’s face is practically audible. “Come on, Harrington, you can tell me. You feeling a little left out? Panties getting tight thinking about it?”

Billy appears over his shoulder again and glances down.

“Bout to get a little wet too, by the looks of things.”

He wants to shift his weight, try and cover the swelling in his jeans, but Billy’s so close that any movement will have him brushing back against the guy. And there are so many reasons why that can’t happen.

“That what you were heading in there for? Some alone time?” Billy moves forward, lips brushing the back of his ear. “Or were you hoping if you stuck around up here, someone else would come along and...”

He catches a strand of Steve’s hair and tugs it slightly.

Steve knocks Billy’s hand away and turns on him, ready with a “Shut the fuck up, Hargrove” locked and loaded. He doesn’t need to say it though. Billy can tell it’s on the tip of his tongue and the triumphant smile sneaks across his face regardless.

Anything for a reaction.

Anger and embarrassment snap Steve’s jaw shut tight. He maintains a steady eye contact with Billy, knowing that looking away will worsen his loss.

“You know, all this pent up frustration, Harrington, it’s not good for you.” Billy acts like he’s delivering sage advice. “You gotta learn to loosen up. Gotta find an outlet.”

He’s forced to back up when Billy leans in and sniffs at his neck. Like a fucking animal.

“When was the last time somebody *really* fucked you?” Billy whispers it into his jaw. “I mean, just turned you inside out?”

Steve shoulders him away.

“What the fuck is your problem?” He tries to claim every fraction of their height’s inch difference.

Billy cocks his head in response, seems almost amused by the question. His tongue runs a lap across his teeth.

Suddenly, there’s a finger in Steve’s belt loop. Then there’s a tug and now he’s too close to Billy for this to be okay.

“If you ask right, I’ll fuck you. Seeing as we’re buddies and all.” Billy smiles like he’s drunk but Steve knows better. Drunk Billy isn’t this mouthy. “Bend you over, stretch you out. Give Daddy’s Girl over there a run for her money – ”

The instant Steve shoves him away, Billy breaks into a cackle of laughter that makes his skin crawl. It ends too abruptly not to have been forced and then Billy’s quiet again, staring at him and seeming so much taller than he was before.

“That’s not a ‘no’, pretty boy.”

And because everyone has it in for him tonight, the bathroom door clicks open behind him.

Steve doesn’t look around but wonders how much the person inside has heard. He watches Billy’s eyes flicker past his shoulder, sees him give the party-goer a “What the fuck are you looking at?” glare. A set of heels rush down the hallway and Steve prays that the bathroom door is more soundproof than those on the bedrooms.

Billy settles his gaze back on Steve.

“I’m waiting.” He says, dry and monotone.

Steve has to clear his throat before he can speak.

“For what?” And he nearly cringes at how nervous he sounds.

The smirk on Billy’s face says he hears it too.

“Told you, you gotta ask.”

Steve manages to scoff and roll his eyes, hopes that Billy can’t hear the pounding that’s thrumming through his chest. It’s hard to imagine that he can’t. It’s almost all Steve can hear now.

“You’re damaged, man.” He shakes his head and turns towards the empty bathroom. “I mean seriously fucked up – “

His foot barely leaves the floor before there’s a hand on the back of his collar. He’s pulled around and a heavy arm pins him against a framed photo of the Dawson family. Steve’s head vibrates as it connects with the glass. He wouldn’t be surprised if he heard it crack. The frame or his skull.

He opens his eyes and squints through the pain, staring Billy down as best that he can. Pure menace stares back at him.

“Don’t have to give you a choice, Harrington.” There’s nothing in his voice that makes Steve think this is posturing. “Big party. Everybody’s drunk. No one’s gonna care if you go missing for a while.”

He takes a step closer and pins Steve’s arm to the wall.

“No one’s gonna notice if you show back up a little more broken.”

Billy makes a move for his lips but Steve turns in time to dodge it. The resistance draws a disquieting smile.

“Chill out, Stevie.” Billy laughs dryly. “I’m fucking with you.”

Steve goes still when he feels the brush of something hard press against his thigh. Billy shrugs.

“Mostly.” He adds.

There are insults he could hurl and threats he could make. They’re all swimming around his head but that’s where they stay. His mind’s too clouded for a single word to slip out. He’s too focused on the pressure on his chest and the tightening grip on his arm. The warm breath on his face. The solid look in Billy’s eyes that tells him the guy hasn’t drunk a drop all night. And on the way he’s slipping a thigh between Steve’s legs like an invitation to rub himself against it.

He wants to say his line, his “Shut the fuck up, Hargrove” and follow it with a “Get the fuck off of me”, culminating in a firm shove that puts a healthy distance between them. He wants to, but he doesn’t. He can’t get his head straight. He doesn’t make the decision to start curling his hips. It just kind of happens.

It makes his breath catch a little. He starts pushing forwards and arching up and pressing himself against Billy and...and it only takes a second for him to regret it. A moment after he starts, the moment his hips roll a second time to catch the same sensation again, Billy gets that smile on his face. The one that says “I won”.

“You gotta ask.” Billy reminds him.

Steve’s hips stall and his hand curls into a fist, tendons flexing against Billy’s grip. He wonders why he’s letting his unrestrained hand stay still.

He pretends to himself that he’s drunk enough to blame this on the alcohol. Promises that, whatever happens, he’ll tell himself that that was why.

“Please.” He mutters, hoping he can make it out with some dignity.

Billy’s exaggerated tutting tells him that that won’t happen.

“Please what?” He asks, frowning. “You expect me to do something, Harrington, you’re gonna have to tell me what it is you

want.”

The thigh between his legs presses forward slightly and Steve gasps. He tries to ignore the way his back arches and his cock throbs, pretends his blood doesn't start heating up.

“I...I want...” He realises then that he doesn't know the end to that sentence.

The grip on his arm loosens and Billy raises a hand to Steve's cheek. Only when a heavy thumb starts tracing his bottom lip does Steve realise how dense his breathing has gotten. He pants across the tip of Billy's thumb, breath hitching when he feels it slip into his mouth and hears a ring clack against his teeth.

“It's okay, pretty boy.” Billy coos, pressing down on his tongue. “I know what you want.”

As he enters the bathroom, Steve feels a hand press against the small of his back. He can't tell if it's an indication to hurry up or a sign of reassurance. When he hears the lock shut behind him and the clink of a loosening belt, he worriedly tries to convince himself that it's the latter.

Turns out there's a third way to shut Billy Hargrove up. Steve had expected that he'd have to put up with Billy's mouthy bullshit the whole time, that he'd be all dirty talk and ceaseless taunting. By the time they're finished though, Steve's barely heard him say a word.

Twice, a knock at the door had prompted him to yell out a harsh “Fuck off” but aside from that, he had stayed almost silent. Almost. There were two instances where he'd spoken to Steve. Once at the beginning. Once at the end.

“Spread your legs” and “Push it out”.

Seems like when he's thinking with his dick, Billy has a three word limit.

Steve's limbs are still shaky. He'd spent almost the whole time on the floor, on all fours. He's still down there, lying on the bathmat and trying to set his head straight. Billy's sitting against the sink, eyes shut, swimming in post-orgasm endorphins. Steve wishes he was able to sit up. He wants to be eye level with Billy.

He shifts slightly and cringes. The discomfort is one thing but there's a mixture of...*fluids*, some dried and some not, coating his body that are all the more noticeable when he moves. The sweat. The cum, both his and Billy's. There's some spit, he knows, and some lotion that he'd thanked God Billy had used to open him up. He tries not to think about it but he knows there's some blood there too. Not a lot. But enough to keep him lying on the floor. Enough to stop him from looking because he knows that once he sees it, he'll start to shake again.

Needing to think of something else, he decides to break the silence.

“Can you...can you throw me that towel?”

Billy cracks an eyelid open and lets out a frustrated huff, as if Steve has been bugging him all night. He makes a show of reaching behind him and pulling a large towel from the rail. Before he throws it towards Steve, Billy uses it to wipe his own face and chest. The few droplets of stray cum that stain his inner thigh remain untouched.

By the time Billy chucks the towel at him, it smells like Paco Rabanne and cigarettes. But so does Steve, now.

“Thanks.” He mutters, sitting up against the bathtub.

There's a quick sting of pain that he tries to hide. He tries not to think about it or why it's there. Tries not to think about what's happened or who it happened with. He doesn't know if he regrets it but he also doesn't want to make that decision right now. For now,

he just wants to get cleaned up. He wants to head home. He wants to come up with an excuse for not coming out of bed for the next day or two.

The towel isn't working too well. Too much has dried on him already. His own on his stomach, Billy's on the back of his thighs.

"Push it out." He'd told him.

He'd done it without hesitation, instinctively started flexing and contracting until he felt the wet warmth start to trail out of him. It had hurt. Trying to work his muscles when they were already worn. But Billy had said it, so he'd done it. That blind obedience is another thing he doesn't need to think about right now.

But the crusted reminder is proving difficult to scrub away.

"Need some help?"

It comes from nowhere. At this stage, Steve had figured that Billy's silence would remain unbroken until they left the room, likely even after that. Hearing him speak is almost jarring. More so as it's an offer of help.

Billy's staring at him, watching him with a muted expression that makes Steve think he doesn't care what the answer is. That it doesn't really matter to him either way.

So Steve nods.

The silence returns after that. Billy moves from the ground and snatches a cloth from the neatly folded tower next to the sink. He takes one from the bottom, disrupting the order and sending the top two handtowels tumbling to the floor. It makes Steve smile for half a moment, because he knows that Billy would just *need* to make it as messy as possible.

He douses the cloth in hot water. Steve waits, assumes he'll just hand it over when he's done, and raises his hand expectantly once it's wet through. Instead, Billy wrings it out and turns around, keeping his eyes on the soaked cotton. Steve doesn't know what to do when he kneels down on the floor and shifts towards him, gaze fixed on

Steve's stained stomach.

He wants to thank him and snatch the cloth away. He has the words ready to go but they never make it out. When Billy settles between his legs and leans forward, puts a hand on his hip like he needs to be held in place, Steve kind of forgets to say anything. He forgets that he shouldn't stare at Billy the way he's staring at him. He forgets that he shouldn't feel the way he does when Billy starts wiping him clean.

The hot water does the job pretty quick. Steve reaches to take the cloth, needing now more than ever to be rid of the dried remains of Billy that cling to his legs. He's ignored though. Billy stays silent, never raises his eyes from his work.

Steve lets his hand drop and keeps watching.

After a minute, Billy leans back slightly, pulls his grip from Steve's hip. His eyes trail up and meet Steve's for a moment. He raises a brow and Steve thinks he understands. He nods again.

Billy slowly hooks his arms under Steve's knees, drawing him forward and letting him slip down against the side of the tub. He manages to prop himself up on his elbows but still feels exposed as hell. Billy's between his legs again, this time with a hand at his thigh. He runs the cloth over his own mess and Steve feels relieved as it lifts from his skin. He chokes back a whine as Billy works his way back, eventually reaching the tender ring of muscle that Steve doesn't want to think about.

He keeps his eyes on Billy's, watches as they zero in on that spot. They dart up to his for a second and it makes him worry. Billy just strokes Steve's thigh with his free hand and looks back down. As he rubs gently over the...*everything* that Steve knows is staining him there, Billy keeps that other hand brushing softly under his thigh, a bizarre act of reassurance that makes the aches in Steve's insides quietly slip away.

When he's finished, when Steve can feel that everything's gone, Billy throws the cloth into the corner of the room. A quick glance after it gives Steve full view of a small streak of red running stark

across the white cotton. It makes his chest feel tight. In a second, there's a hand at his chin, pulling his gaze forward.

Billy shakes his head a little. Somehow, it's enough.

It takes Steve longer to get dressed than it does Billy. The guy doesn't seem to believe in layers or underwear or buttoning his shirt, which would save time. As Steve is still pulling his jeans on, Billy pats himself down, searching for cigarettes. They still haven't spoken.

Once a battered pack of Lucky Strikes is located, Billy's hand is on the door knob and Steve has to rush to fix his zipper before they're potentially caught by a queue of drunken high schoolers. This isn't the same as Becky walking in on him fucking another girl. This isn't in the same league.

To his relief, Shelley Dawson's hallway is empty when Billy yanks the door open.

Steve wonders what's supposed to happen when they step outside again. He doesn't know. Sure as shit doesn't want to ask.

As he pulls his sweater on he looks to Billy, standing at the doorway and staring in at him. Steve waits for something, anything, because if he's left alone, without a word or a look or anything to go by, he knows he'll be lost for a long time.

Billy just stares. His eyes drop to the floor for what feels like too long before rising only as far as Steve's chest.

"Catch you later."

And then he's gone.

Billy Hargrove and his three word limit.